

HEIDI ALLEN MP
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Jo Johnson, MP

Minister of State for Transport, Minister of State for London

By email to - Jo Johnson

By copy to - Stuart Cheshire, Passenger Services Director, GTR

Dr Edward Carder, Chair Royston, Letchworth and Villages Rail User Group

8th June 2018

Dear Jo,

Thank you for meeting with me and Dr Edward Carder on Tuesday to discuss the recent GTR timetable launch; its failings, the impact of these on commuters and what is being done to put things right.

We were both grateful for your candour and contrition and I know that commuters will also value the fact that their recent pain and disruption has been recognised and acknowledged at the highest level and by those working on the emergency timetable and improvements.

As Chair of the Rail User Group (for Royston, Letchworth, Ashwell, Shepreth, Meldreth and Foxton), Edward submitted a letter outlining some specific requests and we also covered some of these in our meeting. I'm outlining here what we discussed and would appreciate your confirmation by return, so that I may reassure my constituents that there is plan to end the chaos.

1. GTR have committed to implementing the emergency timetable which will be fully operational by the end of the month. This timetable will ensure that reliable services run on a stable platform to meet commuters' demands for regular, reliable, albeit reduced services.
2. I outlined that train service communications need to improve in order to serve commuters better. GTR expected that these would also be fully overhauled by the end of the month. I put on record that I felt this wasn't quick enough and I formally asked for an improvement plan outlining how GTR intend to make these improvements before the end of June.
3. Stuart, on behalf of GTR requested urgent help from the DfT in realising additional capacity on Great Northern routes. This can be generated by a restructuring of the East Coast mainline route network. The RRUG letter also outlines the need to prioritise key commuter routes on the Great Northern network, giving greater priority to these vital timetable slots which have suffered at the expense of the East Coast line. You agreed to look at this issue.
4. Please may I request that GTR provide weekly updates detailing improvements (or indeed setbacks) that I and neighbouring MPs can share with constituents? Please can this commence from week commencing 11th June, one week after our initial meeting?
5. GTR committed to addressing the specific concerns of the RRUG in a timely manner and these are detailed in the separate letter attached to this communication (and also provided at the meeting).

6. GTR will work closely with the RUG to develop a long-term timetable that better services the needs of all stations on the network including those of the villages, Ashwell and Morden Foxton, Shepreth and Meldreth in addition to the needs of the larger stations of St Neots, Royston and Letchworth following the implementation of the emergency timetable later this month.
7. The DfT will consider our request for compensation at least akin to that offered to Southern commuters during their severe disruption in 2016. This is to be equivalent to one month's ticket or more, depending on the level of disruption incurred over the coming weeks. An announcement about this will be made shortly.
8. As part of the Glaister review, you committed to talk directly to train operators, thus removing the tendency to be solely reliant on the independent Rail Industry Readiness Board for future sign-off changes.

Following the meeting, both Edward and I felt confident that a strong relationship had been established between the DfT, GTR and the Rail User Groups. This dialogue will help to deliver a better timetable for all users once we have passed the emergency timetable phase.

Once again, thank you for an honest, productive and important meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Allen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Heidi Allen
MP for South Cambridgeshire